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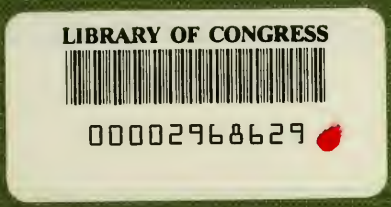

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THE DOVE AND THE EAGLE.

"Desilite," inquit, "milites, nisi vultis aquilam hostibus prodere; ego certe meum Reipublicæ et Imperatori officium præstitero."

Cæsar. De Bello Gall. Lib. iv. § 25.

BOSTON:
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"Our own duties are next us, other men's farther off. I do not speak this that I do mislike the destroying and pulling down of that which is ill, but then let us be as earnest to plant and build up that which is good in the room of it. * * Let us quickly mend our candlesticks and we shall not want lights."— Sir Benjamin Rudyard.— *Speech in H. C. on the Inquiry into the State of Religion*, A. D. 1628.

THE DOVE AND THE EAGLE.

In that soft season of the year,
When early daisies first appear,
And new-born violets dare unfold
The freshness of the virgin mould;
When airs, of late so wild and rude,
With soothing whispers stir the wood,
And wakening nature feels the power
Of genial sun and kindly shower,
And the sweet season's influence
Breathes softening over every sense;
An Eagle, king of some high peak,
'Mid icy cliffs and breezes bleak,

Returning from the troubled shore
Where mingling winds and waters roar ;
His lordly stomach gorged with prey
Snatched, lordlike, from the angry spray ;
As stately onwards sweeping through
The fields of heaven's celestial blue,
Though his wild eye in upper air
Not oft encountered sight so fair,
Yet full before the bird of Jove
Sailed swiftly on a snow-white Dove.

The Dove was far too conscience clear,
To entertain a thought of fear ;
And whether 't was his recent foray
Had made his appetite so sorry,
Or the sweet influence of the season
Had brought his kingly maw to reason ;
Or, since the Lion, as some think,
From virgin innocence will shrink,
Our pure and gentle friend could awe
The king of air by nature's law ;

'T is certain some strange courtesy
Half softened in his wild gray eye,
And in his altered voice might seem
Something this side his usual scream.

Addressing her, which was but reason,
Since speaking first to kings is treason,
Just as one overtakes a neighbor
Returning home at eve from labor,
With compliments and easy chatter,
And such preliminary matter,
They kept along with friendly feather,
And sailed their airy way together;
'Till, on a hill-side, where a block
Of bold, gray, weather-beaten rock
Stood jutting out, but hung so high,
Poised midway 'twixt the earth and sky,
The brook beneath, with gurgling flow,
Sent up no murmur from below,
And scarce a stunted pine-tree fluttered
As sobbing winds around it muttered,

Our new-made friends, quite social grown,
Saw fit occasion to light down,
And thus of things that touch the nation,
Discoursed in serious conversation.

"I, my sweet friend," quoth royalty,
"Who roam o'er earth and air and sea,
And, just to nature's sovereign sway,
Make all that I can seize my prey,
That grand and ancient rule of might,
Which is unquestionably right, —
Have frequent thoughts come o'er my mind,
And chiefly after I have dined,
Following on any slight refection,
Comes food for serious recollection;
Of this strange instinct, deeply planted,
By which my regal breast is haunted,
Which makes me quite forgetful grow,
Of wild or gentle, high or low,
The moment hunger's strong suggestion
Presents the interesting question,

Decided soon, betwixt refining
And the necessity of dining ;
Come quarry then within my swoop,
And morals all go cock-a-hoop.

" Yet when from some such airy height
As this, commanding ample sight,
I look beneath upon the plain,
And man, who claims consummate reign,
And view the selfish, squabbling creatures
Defile their hearts and soil their natures,
'T is then my royal stomach rises,
To watch their tricks and mean devices,
And my own conscience, that before
Creaked like some ill-made, wind-swung door,
Forgetful of its former twinges,
Works as if swung on fresh oiled hinges.

" You pretty one, whose gentle life
Knows little of my fiercer strife,

But whom your station leads to see
Much general society,
Fain would I know, in honest part,
How these things strike your simple heart."

"Right noble Sir," replied the Dove,
"Our life, indeed, is one of love?
Not we, with reverence be it said,
Prey on the living or the dead;
Our daily food some scattered grains,
Picked, here and there, with wondrous pains,
And quite remote from every trouble,
Save now and then some barn-door squabble,
Such momentary miffs as rise
When this or that one finds a prize,
Domestic bliss thence grows completer,
As passing clouds make sunshine sweeter.
Our lives thus passed in peace and quiet,
On good, plain, wholesome, honest diet,
Whence best philosophers agree
Come purest thoughts, ambition free,

We circle through the yielding air,
Unvexed by life's absorbing care;
To live and love our one desire,
To naught beyond our souls aspire;
My very heart the thought would harrow,
To turn the feather of a sparrow,
Nor would my conscience let me stifle
Things you, great Sir, might deem a trifle.
We see this world, as on it scrambles,
Find roses much more scarce than brambles,
Deducing such unwholesome fruit,
From selfishness, its bitter root;
But hold our rule, that every brother
Is happiest helping one another,
And best displays his Christian part,
By act humane and kindly heart.

"Perhaps these rustic things I mention
Scarce worthy your serene attention;
No life we lead among the great,
Nor comprehend affairs of state."

"True, gentle friend," the Eagle said,
And somewhat tossed his haughty head,
"'Tis plainly to be seen your station
Precludes much general observation;
And yet I muse that this world's folly
Has never made you melancholy.

"Methinks that common sense and reason
Have grown, at length, quite out of season;
No more the heart and soul heroic,
No more the virtues of the stoic,
No more the counsels of the sage,
No more the reverence due to age,
No more the burning, generous youth
That pants for glory, lives for truth;
But blank conceit and weak pretence,
And morals shallow as its sense,
Its ancient honor all polluted,
Its old, plain, manly mind diluted,
For good, strong, honest, homely thought,
Stuff made of dreams and cobweb-wrought.

And all that fired, and all that shone,
Dimmed, quenched, extinct, contemned, and
gone ;
So much confused that once was glorious,
And silly mischief half victorious ;
This, my dear friend, the social state
Which makes me sadden at its fate.
This world is sick, you may be sure,
Beyond all art or nature's cure,
A mighty monster, HUMBUG hight,
Has clutched it fast and holds it tight.

"Hear its reformers from the gutter
Their new-found moral notions utter,
And Truth would seem but just begun
To show its face beneath the sun!
Their darkened minds catch some faint gleam
Of holy Light's perennial beam,
And owl-like fluttering, who but they
Discoverers of the God of Day!
One just has gained a glimmering notion
Of Heaven's high claim to man's devotion,

And straight he leaps the whole relation
Of man, time, place, degree, and station,
Despises what is only real,
Grapples the abstract and ideal,
And what he jumps to for conclusion,
Would make the universe confusion.

"Some tippling vagabond starts up
To dash in time the poisoned cup;
Feels, as he wakes to sober sadness,
This the great sin, — the primal madness;
And, heedless that life's noblest use
Might be denounced by its abuse,
Of all true virtue, to his thinking,
The sum consists in water drinking,
And the law, moral and divine,
Means only abstinence from wine!

"And in this world of good and evil,
Where much seems sadly out of level,
And triumph often crowns the bad,
While virtue suffers and is sad;

Where wisdom starves and walks alone,
Folly in crowds and overgrown;
Where fortune waits upon the knave,
And this is free and that a slave;
In such a state, so oddly blended,
But all, no doubt, for good intended,
Since Heaven's high purpose can educe
From seeming evil real use; —
Some puny whipster, by this light,
Deems himself born to set all right,
And thinks the very mischief in it,
If he can't mend it in a minute;
To madness seems completely given, —
Flies in the face of earth and heaven, —
Because his modest innovation,
Fails to remodel all creation!

"No, my good friend, whoever tries
To use, as nature meant, his eyes,
Will find how tends all such philosophy
The mind to cloud, the heart to ossify;

Uncured as yet life's state of ill,
Though social sophists preach their fill;
And manly strength and courage high,
And the bold heart's true constancy,
So needful, never yet became
To touch life's embers into flame,
To wake it from its sluggish sleep,
To give its nobler purpose sweep,
To free the truth, which really seems,
Half buried under idle dreams,
And cleanse it of this whining stuff,
Of which, methinks, we've had enough."

"Sir," said the Dove, "I grieve to find
Such sadness vex your royal mind;
Much to which mortals are addicted
I own my bosom has afflicted;
Old things have lost their old respect,
And good things fallen into neglect;
In manners there is too much looseness,
In moral sense a strange obtuseness;

Those ancient words, which once had power
To guide and rule life's varied hour,
Faith, bright with glories from afar,
Honor, of noble minds the star,
Truth, like a cuirass, clasped and prest
Forever on the generous breast, —
The modest mien, that shrinks from vice,
The unsullied soul, beyond all price, —
Such things are shorn of half their worth,
Since transcendental light broke forth,
A mocking, flickering, feeble ray,
Fit to lead fools the downward way.

" Even I, who seldom speculate,
Am vexed at times with much debate,
Disturbed in mind with strange confusions,
Touching the end of these delusions,
Since modern socialists have free sent
Their doctrines, neither wise nor decent,
And, flagrant in their false ambition,
Even unsexed women preach sedition.

"Yet should not we, with honest hearts,
Act as we may our several parts,
Nor while these sinners blow their bubbles,
Distress ourselves with needless troubles?
This world wags on, blow high or low,"—
"Nay," quoth the Eagle, "say not so;
It quite delights me to discover
You sometimes think these matters over;
And, though my nature prompts to war
By *regum ratio ultima*,
And, in our state of imperfection,
To this I see no just objection;
Yet Heaven forefend that I should prove
Traitor to Heaven's high law of Love.
But, in this world of rampant vice,
We need discrimination nice;
To love the bad were scarcely just,
Like those who most deserve our trust;
And to keep peace with all things evil,
Seems much like treaty with the Devil.

"Believe me, friend, this world's affairs
Demand profoundest thoughts and cares,
Lest, 'mid the turmoil, heat, and passion,
Truth grow entirely out of fashion.
Poor husbandry it were, 't is plain,
To burn the field of golden grain,
Because the tare's unwholesome weed
Springs neighbor to the bounteous seed.

"And yet such shallow casuistry,
Scarce fit for Epicurus' sty,
Has vogue enough to cheat the many,
Led by some jack-o'lantern zany,
Pregnant with unsubstantial schemes
Wrought out of cloud by John-a-dreams.

"Little they reck, to gain one point,
Though all things else get out of joint,
And, for some partial good, would deal
Woe to the universal weal.
Nothing is more absurd to see
Than this miscalled philanthropy!

High, holy, pure, the gracious plan
Which bids man love his fellow-man ;
Yet who can honor him, whose breast
For one pet wrong neglects the rest ?
Who, reckless of time, mode, and season,
Pushes conclusions out of reason ;
Till his philanthropy, indignant,
Assumes a type but too malignant ;
And zeal, turned gall, begets a spite
To all but his own rule of right,
And mounts him on his special evil,
To ride it to the very devil !

" Give me that patriot love, whose glow
The manliest, gentlest bosoms know,
That, with the statesman's wiser soul,
Protects the part, maintains the whole ;
Not his who, mad for any cause,
Hates his own country and her laws ;
Her Constitution's starry glory, —
Each gallant theme that gilds her story,

All other rights of man or woman,
All other things divine and human;
Because such slight considerations
Withstand his wiser inclinations!

"One man conceives that non-resistance
Involves no serious inconsistence,
So he hold off from clapper-claws,
Whate'er the license of his jaws;
Though he is very far from chary
In choice of his vocabulary;
Than Ancient Pistol no more nice is
In language, or than King Cambyses.
In conscience he is far too tender
To Cesar, Cesar's things to render,
Though social order's strong defences
Protect him from harm's consequences;
But flouts the Law, whose holy fiat
Maintains the universal quiet,
And sovereign, when he wakes or sleeps,
His silly head from mischief keeps.

"And thus it comes, that he whose mind
To its own lot has felt resigned,
Who always led a quiet life,
Apart from this world's fever strife,
Has loved his country and obeyed
The laws, which all his safety made;
Honored his betters, — did his duty,
And all whose days were daily beauty;
Who spoke no scandal, writ no libel,
But feared his God and read his Bible;
And hoped that virtuous means would tend
To win, at last, the good man's end;
Why such, who honor earth, and give
Heaven's holy lesson how to live, —
Why such, so pure, so true, so wise,
If yet they breathe beneath the skies,
Our modern witlings view with loathing,
As just precisely good for nothing,
So useless, so behind the age,
Superfluous laggards on life's stage!"

"And yet, methinks," rejoined the Dove,
"Our gentle life of sinless love
Presents an ever bright example,
And proves a panoply most ample
Against these ills you so much dread,"—
And more, perchance, she would have said,—
But, as some blessing often springs
Beneath misfortune's brooding wings,
So frequent, in our proudest hours
Some unexpected evil lowers;
And thus it happened, as she spake,
A slimy, creeping, deadly snake,
(Who, by his one idea so blinded,
The king of air had never minded,)
Regardless of the law of love,
Like lightning sprang upon the Dove!
Round her white neck his folds enwreathing,
Had stopped the fluttering creature's breathing;
But that the Eagle, who astounded,
By such impertinence confounded,

A second stood, — then like a thought
The intruder in his talons caught,
Stretched all his loathly length before him,
And to a thousand ribbons tore him!

Serenely turning, not a ruffle
Received from such inglorious scuffle,
But with that air of satisfaction
Which waits upon a virtuous action,
(While the poor Dove stood trembling by
With quaking heart and drooping eye,)
"My lovely friend," the Eagle said,
"Your foe, thanks to the stars, is dead;
Chase then away this sad dejection,
And find some lesson worth reflection.

"This world of ours, beyond debate,
Is but a very mixed estate;
Unvalued half its virtues shine,
Its pearls are cast before the swine,

And folly sweeps its noblest things,
As down flies on the whirlwind's wings,
Or autumn leaves, flung on the river,
Float downwards till they sink forever.
Helpless, alas! your very sweetness,
Without my strength and fiery fleetness,
Against such creeping, noisome creature,
Of sordid heart and grovelling nature;
And if my counsel you would ponder,
'T would teach you not from home to wander,
Since from such harms your innocence
Would prove, I fear, but weak defence.

"For might I, madam, dare propound
Advice which I conceive most sound,
For feathered creatures fit and human,
For every Dove and every woman, —
It is, that all their loveliest graces
Shine most in their appropriate places,
Swaying, at home, with gentle art
Their mighty empire of the heart;

Not circling round in distant flights,
Nor gadding out, in quest of rights.
For every right that women gain
Does but sophisticate their reign,
Breaks through life's holiest, sweetest trance,
Dispels the dream of young romance,
Defrauds them of that proud submission,
We gladly yield to their condition,
Is treason to that empire high
Ruled by the law of smile and sigh,
And could they think it worth pursuing,
Would only end in their undoing.

"And now a something at my heart
Tells me, sweet friend, 't is best we part,
You for the softer walks of life,
I for the crag, the storm, the strife.
And, to be plain, as I'm a sinner,
Some intimations touching dinner,
Unsafe for you, my lovely guest,
Unworthy of my royal breast,

Urge me to end our conversation
By swallowing you for my collation.
Fly then in time, adieu, adieu!"
And down the yielding air she flew,
While he, on mighty pinions spread,
Up to his crag-built eyry sped.

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